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ABSTRACT

Three large urban school districts located in the Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast regions were involved in a study designed to reveal district personnel's perceptions of change within their school district. After describing the study, this document analyzes perceptions of change related to one district's new bilingual program that was identified by district respondents as an example of effective districtwide change. Following a description of the school district, direct quotes from study participants reveal their perceptions of change in the district. Their positive impressions of the bilingual program implementation are discussed, and elements identified as crucial to the implementation process are presented: (1) intensive and ongoing staff development; (2) use of classroom teachers as trainers and nationally recognized experts; (3) rotation of teachers in supervisory positions; (4) specific and detailed guidelines in each area of district implementation; (5) visible and strongly stated support from the superintendent; and (6) organizational modifications to existing practices. Additional factors perceived as important to the positive impressions of the program implementation are discussed, and implications of study results for bilingual education program implementation are suggested. (17 references) (CLA)

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School District Personnel Describe One Example of Effective Change Implementation

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School District Personnel Describe One Example of Effective Change Implementation

by Toni Griego Jones

Abstract

In recent years public education has been involved in a myriad of change and reform efforts. Many studies have been done by outside experts looking into school systems in an attempt to describe and judge the effectiveness of these efforts. However, this paper reports on a selected set of results from a study which explored how school district personnel themselves think about change in their respective school systems and how they are involved in district wide change. It is important to research insiders' perspectives because people act according to what they think is important to do. How they define change determines how they become involved in it.

Although this paper is about the implementation of a new bilingual program into a large, urban school district, the study itself did not ask individuals about bilingual education programs or any other specific types of innovations current in school systems. Rather, respondents were asked to define what "change" in school systems meant to them and to give examples of changes that had taken place in their districts. The new bilingual program surfaced as an example of change in one of the school districts.

The goal of the study was to gain information that would be helpful in improving efforts at change in school systems. Three large, urban school districts located in the Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast regions of the country were chosen for the study. The district personnel selected (superintendents, supervisors of curriculum, personnel, elementary and secondary instruction, program managers, principals, and teachers) were those who held positions identified in the literature on change and institutionalization as being important to these processes.

Data collection was accomplished through on-site interviews with the district respondents, through observations in central administrative offices and schools, and historical research on the districts. Data were analyzed qualitatively using an ethnograph computer program to determine examples and definitions of change, commonalities and differences in concepts of change within the various levels of district personnel, and between districts.

The findings were consistent with the literature which illustrates the complexity of the change process in school districts. Change involved not only the processes of initiation and implementation of innovations, but very complex interrelationships among district personnel.

Descriptions of change efforts in the three districts fell into four categories: curricular, personnel, organizational, and mandated changes such as court ordered busing. This paper analyzes descriptions of an example of change implementation identified by respondents in one of the three school districts. These descriptions produced a surprising example of effective implementation of district wide change. Surprising, because the example was of the implementation of a court mandated bilingual program into a large, urban school district. With bilingual education under constant attack, it was significant to find that the implementation of a bilingual program was identified by district personnel themselves as an example of effective implementation and change. Although heartening to bilingual educators, the real significance of the findings lies in what they tell us about factors important to those who actually have to implement change in school systems.

This example of change clearly stood out in this district because it was the only one where there was a universal perception about what had happened in the implementation process. The other examples of change in this district included several major change efforts such as site-based management, new integrated curriculum, organizational restructuring, new approaches to teaching reading, and busing for integration. However, the bilingual implementation was the only one which was clearly and similarly perceived by personnel from all levels and departments of the district.

Descriptions given by personnel in this district identified the following as crucial to the effective implementation of its district wide bilingual program: intensive and ongoing staff development for principals and central administrators as well as teachers and paraprofessionals; the use of classroom teachers as trainers as well as nationally recognized experts; rotation of teachers in supervisory positions; widespread involvement of all levels of district staff from the building level to central administration to the superintendent; clear and common perceptions of an implementation plan or process; specific and detailed guidelines for each area of the district (curriculum, personnel, evaluation, instruction); visible and strongly stated support from the superintendent; and organizational modifications to existing practices (such as job descriptions and placement procedures for those involved in the innovation, budget and time allotment for intensive staff development, and adjustments in departmental rules and regulations). There was a pervasive theme throughout descriptions given by respondents which emphasized the importance of teachers.

Each respondent described his own involvement in the bilingual implementation and was able to describe the role of others in the district. This common perception clearly contributed to the feeling of coherence and effectiveness in implementation. Even those who are not traditionally identified as "bilingual" personnel described an ownership of their part of the implementation and were able to describe what had happened throughout the district in the implementation of the district wide bilingual program.

Another significant feature of this example of district wide change was that it was one of only two examples offered in any district that was directly aimed at minority students. This, is spite of the fact that all three districts had significant minority student populations, between fifty and eighty-seven per cent. The other example offered was mandated busing for integration which surfaced as a change in all three districts. Both of the other districts in the study had bilingual programs, but their programs were never mentioned as examples of change by their personnel.

Results from the study suggest that those interested in effective implementation of bilingual programs should work to develop a clear and common understanding among all district personnel identified in the change literature as important to change implementation. It may not be enough to have only bilingual personnel knowledgeable and involved in the implementation. Roles within each area or department of the district must be clearly delineated and the function or contribution of each department understood by those in the department as well as others in the district.

Traditionally, evaluation of bilingual program implementation has looked only at how well state and federal guidelines have been followed (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Sumner, 1977). Perhaps it is time bilingual programs should be considered in a different light, as serious educational innovations which require planning for district wide responsibilities and implications.

Respondents in the study did not pretend to evaluate the effectiveness of the bilingual program itself. Rather, the study addressed the issues of the change process and roles of different personnel in change. However, in order to judge the effectiveness of an innovation, we first have to look at how it has been implemented or put into place. The goals for any given innovation will never be fully realized unless the innovation becomes fully operative in the system (Gross et al., 1971; Loucks, 1983; Miles & Louis, 1986). Basically, therefore, change is dependent on whether a new program is adequately implemented or not. In part, that is dependent upon whether district personnel have made the necessary adjustments to the system to allow the innovation to be operable. This study gives some insight as to specific actions school district personnel themselves consider important.

School District Personnel Describe One Example of Effective Change Implementation

by Toni Griego Jones

Introduction

Research on bilingual education programs has generally dealt with program design models, instructional methods and strategies, or first and second language acquisition theory. There has been very little study of the actual implementation of bilingual programs, that is, the process of putting bilingual programs into place in school districts. Even when implementation of bilingual programs has been examined, it has traditionally looked only at how well state and/or federal guidelines have been followed (Berman & McLaughlin, 1978; Ovando & Collier, 1985; Sumner, 1977).

This paper reports on a selected set of results from a larger study which explored school district personnel's perceptions of change within their school systems. The selected results suggest that bilingual program implementators would benefit not only from a more sophisticated study of implementation, but that they would be justified in thinking of bilingual education implementation as an attempt at district wide reform.

The results came from a study which examined school district personnel's perceptions of "change" and the roles they played in district change efforts. Respondents from one district in the study identified the implementation of a bilingual program as an example of district wide

change. Further, the bilingual program was seen as an effective example of district wide implementation of a planned change effort. Perhaps it is time bilingual programs should be considered in a different light, as serious educational innovations which require planning for district wide responsibilities and repercussions. School districts are awash with reform efforts, much of them purportedly aimed at improving minority student achievement. Bilingual education is and always has been aimed at reforming how schools approach the education of language minority students. However, those who have been involved in the implementation of bilingual programs have not usually approached it as a district wide reform effort in public schools.

Background of the study

There are many reasons why school districts decide to initiate innovations in their systems and there is a great deal of time, money, and energy spent trying various reforms and innovations. Changes are initiated with the assumption that their implementation is possible within the existing structure of school systems (Crandall, 1983; Huberman & Miles, 1982 Loucks, 1983); or that it is possible to change the district structure, to restructure (David, 1989).

Change in school districts has been demonstrated to be a very complex process involving not only the initial acceptance and implementation of programs, but an understanding of the interrelationships and perceptions of district personnel as well (Cox, 1983; Griego-Jones, 1990; House, 1974). Although important elements involved in making lasting change in school systems are identified in the change literature, there is little agreement

about their relative importance in any given situation, or about how they interrelate. Some of these elements are: administrative commitment and support, staff development, adequate personnel and material resources, effective use of innovations (Berman & McLaughlin, 1974-78; Huberman & Miles, 1982) and attention to organizational structure, rules, and procedures that stabilize and protect the innovation (Yin, 1978). The literature also is just beginning to reflect clear and consistent procedures related to the important question of how parts of school systems must work together to implement change effectively (Fullen, 1982; Leithwood, 1990).

The study which produced the descriptions of change efforts, including the bilingual implementation, explored how school district personnel themselves thought about change in their respective school systems and how they were involved in district wide change. The study focused on the awareness of personnel regarding the elements identified as important to change and the roles they thought they played in the change process. It is important to research insiders perspectives because people act according to what they think is important to do (Bogden & Biklin, 1982; Broom & Selznick, 1958; Hopkins, 1990).

Respondents were asked to define what "change" in school systems meant to them and to gives examples of changes that had taken place in their districts. The study was not focused on any programs in particular and so did not ask questions about specific innovations current in school systems. Rather, respondents volunteered information about change and innovations as they defined them in their particular districts. The descriptions produced

examples of change and gave insight into factors important to the people who were involved in implementing any given innovations.

The goal of the study was to gain information that would be helpful in improving efforts at change in school systems. With school districts in ferment trying innovations after innovations, there is a need to research how planned change efforts can be more effectively put into place.

Three large, urban school districts located in the Midwest, Southwest, and West Coast regions of the country were chosen for the study. The district personnel selected (superintendents, supervisors of curriculum, personnel, elementary and secondary instruction, program managers, principals, and teachers) were those who held positions identified in the literature on change and institutionalization as being important to these processes.

Data collection was accomplished through on-site interviews with the district respondents, through observations in central administrative offices and schools, and through historical research on the districts. Data were analyzed qualitatively using an ethnograph computer program to determine examples and definitions of change, commonalities and differences in concepts of change within the various levels of district personnel, and between districts.

The findings were consistent with the literature which illustrates the complexity of the change process in school districts. Change involved not only the processes of initiation and implementation of innovations, but very complex interrelationships among district personnel.

The descriptions of change efforts in the three districts fell generally into four categories: curricular, personnel, organizational, and mandated changes such as court ordered busing. This paper analyzes descriptions of one example of change implementation identified by respondents in one of the three school districts. In this district, the descriptions produced a surprising example of effective implementation of district wide change. Surprising, because it was of the implementation of a court mandated bilingual program into a large, urban school district. With bilingual education under constant attack, it was significant to find that the implementation of a bilingual program was identified by district personnel themselves as an example of effective implementation and change. Implementation of bilingual programs has historically encountered resistance, if not outright hostility, in school districts (Crawford, 1989). Although heartening to bilingual educators, the real significance of the findings lies in what it tells us about factors important to those who actually have to implement planned change in school systems.

The other examples of change in this district included several major change efforts such as site-based management, new integrated primary curriculum, organizational restructuring, new approaches to teaching reading, and busing for integration. However, the bilingual implementation was the only one which was clearly and similarly perceived by personnel from all levels and departments of the district. In fact, this district as a whole exhibited a very confused, negative perception of change in general. There was widespread skepticism toward change.

The district context

The school district which produced the descriptions of successful implementation of the bilingual program, is located in a city which is the economic, cultural, and governmental center for a metropolitan area surrounded by six suburbs. There were 60,000 students in the system, about 66% of them minority--35% Hispanic, 25% Black, 2.5% Asian, and 1.5 Native American students. Enrollment had declined since the mid-seventies when many white students left the district after a desegregation court order, but the total number was beginning to increase in recent years. Although some of the city's neighborhoods were identifiably minority, the city as a whole was not strictly segregated. Further, some of the minority neighborhoods were not in the poorest sections of the city. The city had a diversified economy which included industry, business, and government.

Several major changes had taken place in the district over the last fifteen years, among them, the implementation of a desegregation order. The district had been found guilty of deliberately segregating the school system by manipulating school attendance boundaries, and had been under a comprehensive court order for thirteen years to integrate its schools, implement an affirmative action plan, and improve educational opportunities for minority students. Although there was some exodus of white students, the violence and bitterness that characterized many districts' desegregation efforts in the seventies did not occur in this city's schools.

A part of the original desegregation order included a settlement on programs for limited English proficient (LEP) students. The first program

was rejected by the court and the district went through years of trying various programmatic approaches to teaching language minority students. The settlement for language minority students was the most difficult issue to agree upon and came ten years after the settlement of other major issues contained in the original desegregation order. It was the result of this court suit and subsequent settlement that surfaced as an example of effective implementation of a planned change effort in a large, urban school district.

At the time of the interviews in early spring, 1987, there was some stirring of discontent within the community about their schools, particularly with the superintendent. Members of the largest minority group, the Hispanic community, were beginning to feel that the superintendent was insensitive to minority students' needs. There was a growing concern regarding the very high drop-out rate of minority youth, especially of Hispanic students. Pressure was coming from Hispanic community organizations within the district to take serious action to stem the tide of students dropping out of school.

Perceptions of change

It was against this backdrop that the following general perceptions of change were described. These perceptions reflect the attitude of participants toward change in this district. In general, there was widespread cynicism about the motivation behind change efforts as well as the possibility for success in implementing "changes." The phrase, change in school systems, did not elicit any common definition from personnel. A few volunteered the terms "process and approach." A secondary

administrator stated that it is "a process that a lot of educators shy away from because they are fearful of it. Because it involves risk-taking, it's slow and it's painful and it's an unfamiliar process for most." In fact, it may have been so unfamiliar that no clear and common definition of change emerged from the districts' interviews. One other central administrator called it "another approach to accomplishing, you know, established goals." For the general superintendent, change seemed to be a departure from existing practices. And for the elementary assistant superintendent it was "taking ideas and turning them into action and then sustaining that action through the participation of stake-holders in that process." Other central administrators described change by saying it was multi-layered, positive, exciting, and by using phrases like "change means more opportunities for students and it means opportunities for assignment for teachers." What they perceived change to be--a process, an event, a natural phenomena--was not clear. What they described seemed more to be the implications or results of change, rather than what they thought change actually was.

Teachers especially did not associate the term change in school systems with any meaningful action. They seemed to have an almost cynical attitude toward the topic of change. For example, one said, "It means to me that somebody new has come on board, and it really will make very little difference at the level that I'm working at. It might mean that I'm going to have some new papers to fill out, some new forms to fill out." Another laughed and said, "A new program that will teach all children everything has just been developed and I need to teach it--the third on in 18 years."

Another different, and very general, response from a teacher was that "education is a process that needs to evolve continuously as we find out more about how kids learn and how kids learn best." Teachers tended to think in either broad general terms or in very specific, personal, terms. For example, one teacher recounted an instance where she and another teacher had radically changed the composition of their classes for a year and no one had challenged them. "Nothing stopped us. We never heard anything from downtown. Nobody came to say, 'What are you doing?'"

Another teacher stated, "I think 'change' comes about also through the perceived need to appear to be producing change, frequently on the part of school districts, to satisfy boards of education, and some of those changes are cosmetic and do not serve any real function for students in the classroom. In fact, they probably expend district energy unnecessarily."

This perception introduced another notion that was unique to this district among the three in the study and that surfaced often in its respondents' descriptions of change. That is, that there is superficial change, and then there is "real change." Although no coherent and common picture emerged about what respondents thought change was, most did describe a distinction between superficial and real change. This distinction was something almost everyone talked about. The superintendent stated that he had tried to minimize "any artificial kind of change. I don't believe in change for change sake." He defined artificial change as "something where, in order to show that as a superintendent, that I have provided leadership. That I have established, 'a new program' that everybody had to do, and it was a change from the past . . . . I don't

believe it is helpful, and those are usually superficial, short lived, and met with resistance and ultimately have to be changed to something else."

The secondary superintendent also believed that "there have been different tiers of changes and what I mean by that is there is perceived change and there is actual change. I think actual change is what I'm talking about in terms of risk taking. Its a process that very few want to undertake, and so, on the superficial basis there has been a lot of change." A special programs administrator echoed the idea that there is a lot of "band-aid change" and "we look at very temporary solutions" to problems. She believed that if there was going to be real change, "then the institution can no longer remain stagnant . . . going to be true change."

The notion that the organization itself had to be modified in order for "real" change to take place was also raised by the assistant superintendent for curriculum who believed that "the culture of the school system has to change so that perceptions of power and influence share it, from being authoritarian to supportive. So that people who are in positions in central administration begin to perceive their role and responsibility differently than perhaps they have been in the past." He believed that change is "an organizational responsibility and that the school is the most effective unit of organization in the school district for that change to occur." But, he said, in order for the schools to have the ability to engage in the change process, the system itself had to change. The personnel director also expressed the idea that the school is a unit of organizational change. "Probably those things do (affect)

individual buildings, but they also affect the whole city in a lot of ways. He gave an example of a magnet school "which affects the whole system only because of the way students are selected to go there . . . that would have an affect everywhere you look." From one viewpoint, the system had to change in order to impact schools. From the other's viewpoint, change in individual schools impacted the system.

In their interviews, the central administrators seemed to be talking about modifying the organization in order to produce "real" change in schools or the classroom. The secondary superintendent in particular talked about focusing on modifying the district organization-the "system." He expressed the view that "real organizational change and development addresses the system as a client rather than the student as a client. That is a rare process because we always want to see the student as the client as opposed to the system." This perspective expressed by the secondary superintendent is reflected in the current literature on educational change. In the past, much of the literature and research on change had focused on innovations directed at teachers, students and/or classroom practices. More recently, the literature has reflected the necessity of studying the school district organizational structure itself in order to implement change in schools. Studies are showing the importance of understanding organizational change within school districts and the necessity of impacting the structure of the system (district) if change is to occur in schools. Teachers and principals do not operate in a vacuum, isolation, as many of them would like to believe. They are very much affected by the larger organization. For example, teachers efforts at

improving teaching can be stymied by a lack of resources from central administration.

One shining example

Given the concepts of change and the attitudes toward change expressed by respondents in this district, the example of the bilingual implementation stands out as an accomplishment. The other examples of change which surfaced in the descriptions given by respondents in this district were the development of a new curriculum for the primary grades, busing for integration purposes, and the shift toward "whole language" instruction. At the high school level there had been an attempt to change the administrative structure within the high schools and this was mentioned by the secondary superintendent and a high school teacher. There was also a decentralization (site based management) effort under way, and this was described by most respondents. However, in most cases, the descriptions of decentralization were in response to the researcher's follow up questions and were not volunteered by the majority of respondents as an example of district wide change. The two most frequently mentioned examples were the implementation of the new integrated primary curriculum and the bilingual program. None of the examples offered the same positive, coherent picture of change implementation and acceptance that the new bilingual program did. Perceptions regarding the implementation of this new program were more uniform across the district personnel interviewed than those regarding the implementation of the primary curriculum, site based management or any other change efforts.

This program was volunteered as an example of change, either at a district wide or departmental level by all but two respondents. This was in spite of the fact that the new program had not been voluntarily initiated within the district. Rather, the impetus for initiating the change came from the court ordered plan which had been negotiated between the district and plaintiffs in the desegregation court case.

The narrative below illustrates how the bilingual implementation repeatedly surfaced as a positive example of change implementation in this district. The perceptions were given by a variety of respondents from throughout the district as they talked about "change" in their respective departments.

The first thing to stand out about the bilingual implementation was the positive attitude expressed about this program compared to other change efforts. A second aspect was that personnel thought of it as a district wide project, not just a classroom or building level program. A third aspect was that respondents described their own roles clearly and were able to articulate roles of others. These and other insights will be discussed further at the end of this section.

When asked to give an example of how she defined change in school districts, a bilingual teacher stated, "I think one of the big things that has affected the whole district is the court case, and I think bilingual education had affected the whole district." Like several other respondents, she compared the bilingual implementation to other efforts at change which had taken place in this district. , She stated that the implementation of that program in her building "seemed to be a lot

smoother" than some other mandated changes, like busing. In explaining what helped the implementation, she stated that the first inservice held after the court order was a

> . . . definite plus. And the continued in-service that they've had have been very helpful to teachers because it gave them something to turn to in time of need and stress. There was camaraderie and plus there was theory, and plus there was practical things.

Another teacher (non-bilingual) at the high school level agreed with the positive assessment of the implementation. Both teachers' comments identified a specific, concrete aspect of the implementation that was seen as crucial to successful implementation, that of widespread and meaningful involvement of teachers. This teacher stated that:

> Perhaps better than any other program in the district, the training and the development of a cadre of teachers who can do ESL and bilingual has been accomplished rather remarkably well. With weekend sessions, there has been more training really in that area than in any other program that I can think of in the district.

He went on to explain how some teachers have been "called into service" by alternating years teaching with years of being a resource teacher. "I think that's part of the strength of the program, that there has been quite a lot of teacher buy in and involvement."

Building level administrators also expressed clear and positive perceptions about the implementation of the program. For example, a principal stated the following:

> Probably the most dramatic transition has been that of changing in my first year from what is considered to be more of a regular school to a bilingual school. This has involved not only changes in personnel, but also, in some sense, changes in perhaps one's philosophical base...Now, this school district, unlike many other districts, is under a court order and because of the agreement with the plaintiffs, the type of teacher that we wanted to staff in the bilingual classroom was very precisely delineated in terms of what characteristics or qualities that teacher must have.

He described how teachers in his building who did not meet the qualifications had to be transferred, and new teachers assigned to take the bilingual positions.

> I would say the first thing I needed from personnel [department] was the direction, which I was given, . . . I had to work very closely with, not only the personnel department, but I had to have an extensive personal knowledge of the contractual agreement and how that would interweave, if you will, with the bilingual agreement.

This principal believed that the job of implementing the program had been facilitated by the "clearly delineated" provisions in the court agreement for program personnel, curriculum, and "other directives that are in there." He also admitted that the new superintendent's strong statement of support for implementation of the bilingual program also gave him direction.

> From the minute he came on board, he stated right up from the bilingual education would be one of his primary objectives and his initial goal was to get that in place. I can't really speak for what he has done personally, but that, in itself, carries a considerable amount of weight . . . it's incumbent upon the administrators that are working with the superintendent to hear that message. I think they did, and that may have been one of the reasons why many of the administrators in the district have been as receptive and responsive to that charge.

This description articulated several other aspects of this implementation which respondents in this district identified as important--clearly defined guidelines and support from the superintendent.

The attention to specific role guidelines was also brought up by the secondary superintendent who explained similar processes in talking about how his department implemented the provisions of the new bilingual plan. He said that based on students' needs, the high schools identified the number of bilingual teachers needed and that number was relayed to the

personnel department as a part of the school's total staffing needs. The staffing ratios were outlined in the court agreement and there were specific guidelines for identifying student needs in the agreement.

A major part of the implementation as indicated by everyone's descriptions was staffing for the new program. The personnel director described his responsibility in implementing the bilingual program and his description reflected the same perceptions held by the principal and secondary director. In his descriptions of "change" in this school system, he stated that "probably the largest undertaking we were part of was when the bilingual program came into existence and we needed, immediately, eighty-some bilingual teachers. Well, then it became our responsibility to identify those people and to bring them on board."

He felt the department had been fulfilling its responsibility toward staffing that program. Again, it was a district responsibility. Prior to the court agreement, the bilingual office had often been responsible for helping to identify and place bilingual teachers. His perception of the implementation and his role matched with that of the principal and secondary director.

Not only was the implementation perceived as being positive, the perceptions of what actually happened with that implementation were uniform and clear. There was less confusion about who was involved in the process and what their roles were than in the other samples cited. For example, teachers were the group most affected in both the implementation of the bilingual program and in the implementation of the new primary curriculum. Their perceptions of what was happening in the district regarding those two

efforts were the most strikingly different. Descriptions of the primary curriculum reflected limited involvement of teachers and confused ideas about who was involved and what was happening.

One reason that the implementation of the bilingual program was described more uniformly and clearly by the range of respondents in the district might have been because more of them were involved in that implementation effort than in other programs. For example, the implementation of the new curriculum involved mainly the curriculum department although it would eventually be widespread throughout the district and involve all primary teachers. The implementation of the bilingual program, however, involved not only teachers and others at the building level, it actively involved people from most of the other departments in the system, including curriculum. This widespread involvement of most parts of the system might have been a reason for the clearer perception of the program implementation throughout the system.

In the process of implementing the new bilingual program the role of district bilingual teachers was also given a new dimension. The new program made extensive use of district teachers for training as well as using outside experts. In addition some teachers on special assignment were involved in "central" office coordinating types of roles and all district bilingual teachers had opportunities through frequent staff development activities for collaboration and networking.

Another major difference between other examples of change and that of the implementation of the bilingual program was that those involved in the implementation of the bilingual program knew their roles and those of

others. An important aspect of the implementation was the widespread communication of what was happening in the implementation of the bilingual program. The extensive staff development associated with this program served to communicate goals, requirements, and roles of various actors within the district. This resulted in each actor knowing his role and that of others. The court agreement also outlined the content of what should be included in staff development. The agreement itself contained guidelines for various departmental responsibilities and was widely distributed in the district.

One other difference between the bilingual implementation and other efforts at implementation of change seemed to be in the conscious attention paid to structural adaptations made in various departments to accommodate the bilingual program innovation. For example, some of the organizational modifications to existing practices that aided this implementation were: job descriptions and detailed procedures for placing teachers, budget and time allotment for intensive staff development, and teacher participation as trainers for the new program. These modifications to existing practices that aided the implementation of one innovation were absent in the implementation of the other innovations.

There was general agreement that two very important ingredients in implementing change were time and participant "buy in." "Unless there is buy in from the beginning, in the planning stages," said a teacher, "It simply comes down as a directive, as a memo, as a new thing that is misunderstood . . . and produces resentment or suspicion, mistrust." Historical research found that teachers had at least been represented on a

number of committees which made recommendations to the negotiators of the court agreement. Many of these recommendations had been incorporated into the final consent decree. This, combined with the widespread participant involvement in the implementation contributed to this sense of "buy in" within this district.

In terms of making a lasting change, some of the respondents thought that the bilingual program was becoming an institutionalized part of the system. For example, a bilingual classroom teacher felt that some elements of that program were on the way to being institutionalized. She said, "I think it's got its foot in the door." The secondary superintendent perceived that high school staffing for bilingual classes was becoming something "that the principals consider ...a part of the regular staffing process." The assistant for elementary education stated,

> I think the bilingual program is just an excellent example of, if you give people the opportunity of a period of time to develop and install changes in their own delivery methods, that it can be institutionalized in them (teachers) individually, but that doesn't happen overnight."

Discussion

Descriptions given by the various respondents were characterized by being clear, similar, and consistent across levels and departments in the district and widespread throughout the district. The interviews produced clear and common perceptions of an implementation plan or process.

The descriptions also identified the following elements as crucial to the effective implementation of the district wide bilingual program:

1. intensive and ongoing staff development which included training for principals and central administrators as well as teachers and

paraprofessionals; 2. the use of classroom teachers as trainers as well as nationally recognized experts; 3. rotation of teachers in supervisory positions; 4. specific and detailed guidelines for each area of the district (curriculum, personnel, evaluation, for example); 5. visible and strongly stated support from the superintendent; and 6. organizational modifications to existing practices (such as job descriptions and placement procedures for those involved in the innovation, budget and time allotment for intensive staff development, and adjustments in departmental rules and regulations). All of these elements correspond to what is known in the literature about successful implementation of planned change.

There was also a realization expressed that implementation of planned change requires time and participant "buy in." This "buy in" on the part of the teacher was unusual compared to most literature on planned change, because this change was brought about by mandated court order. The kind of participant support and ownership shown here is usually associated with innovations which originate within the teaching ranks or at a building level. There was, in this case however, a pervasive theme throughout descriptions given by respondents which emphasized the importance of teachers. According to all the literature on change and reform in school districts, the involvement of teachers is crucial to any change effort (Crandall, 1983; David, 1989; Hopkins, 1990).

Each respondent described his own involvement in the bilingual implementation and was able to describe the role of others in the district. This common perception clearly contributed to the feeling of coherence and effectiveness in implementation. Even those who are not traditionally

identified as "bilingual" personnel described an ownership of their part of the implementation and were able to describe what had happened throughout the district in the implementation of the district wide bilingual program.

The implementation itself was probably more effective since the resources that respondents, especially teachers, said were needed for the implementation of the new curriculum were present in the implementation of the bilingual program. Teachers stated that they received needed training, principals described receiving qualified personnel, central administrators described receiving statements of needs from buildings. Training was given not only to instructional staff, teachers and paraprofessionals, but also to building level and central administrators.

The content of the training also served to communicate district goals and define roles of various personnel. Staff development outlined by the court agreement included training on goals and court requirements of the program, on theories of first and second language acquisition, and opportunities for development of proficiency in Spanish. Observations and historical research in the district also indicated a great amount of bilingual materials development and acquisition as a part of the implementation.

Another significant feature of this example of district wide change was that it was one of only two examples offered in any of the districts in the study that was directly aimed at minority students. This, is spite of the fact that all three districts had significant minority student populations, between fifty and eighty-seven per cent. The only other example offered was mandated busing for integration which surfaced as a

change in all three districts. Both of the other districts in the study had bilingual programs, but their programs were never mentioned as examples of change by their personnel.

Implications

Results from the study suggest that those interested in effective implementation of bilingual programs should work to develop a clear and common understanding among all district personnel identified in the change literature as important to change implementation. It is not enough to have only bilingual personnel knowledgeable and involved in the implementation. Roles within each area or department of the district must be clearly delineated and the function or contribution of each department understood by those in the department as well as by others in the district.

Respondents in the study did not pretend to evaluate the effectiveness of the bilingual program itself. Indeed, the new program was just beginning to "take hold" and it would have been difficult to make judgments about the program's long term success. Rather, the study addressed the issue of the change process and roles of different personnel in change. Further study would determine whether classroom instruction and consequent learning actually improved after the new program framework was in place. However, in order to judge the effectiveness of an innovation, we first have to look at how it has been implemented or put into place. The goals for any given innovation will never be fully realized unless the innovation becomes full operative in the system (Gross et al., 1971; Loucks, 1983; Miles & Louis, 1986). Basically, therefore, change is dependent on whether a new program is adequately implemented or not. In part, that is dependent

upon whether district personnel have made the necessary adjustments to the system to allow the innovation to be operable. This study gives some insight as to specific actions school district personnel themselves consider important.

In advocating bilingual education, bilingual educators are dealing with a major philosophical change involving instructional goals, strategies, and structure in the school district. They need to think of bilingual education as an innovation with district wide implications, not just as an add-on for remediation which affects only a small percentage of students. They could marshal a district's resources to improve language education for all students if they were armed with knowledge of how to affect change and reform in school districts. Too often, implementation of bilingual programs has been approached as a way of teaching teachers new strategies and that approach has limited the scope of district involvement. Many times the prevailing attitude has been that only the bilingual program director needed to manipulate the system for resources and personnel.

Even if the prevalent mentality of viewing bilingual education as a remedy for Limited English Proficient students persists, bilingual educators would do well to explore what is known about effective planned change in order to maximize benefits for those students. But, taken a step further, those who believe bilingualism is a worthwhile outcome of public schooling should take on the task of reforming this neglected aspect of public education. When bilingual education is thought of as an educational innovation with goals and results which benefit all students, and not as a remedial or enrichment program, there are significant implications for its

advocates. If bilingual education is a fundamental, legitimate innovation in public schooling, then bilingual educators truly do need to become experts on utilizing everything that is currently known about effectiveness in the change process in education. Because advocates of bilingual education have had to battle for the initiation of bilingual programs in school districts, this aspect of the change process has received some attention. It is the implementation aspect of planned change addressed in this paper that bilingual educators have yet to master.

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